

VZCZCXRO4685

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RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHQU RUEHRD RUEHRG RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC  
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ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 012131Z MAY 09  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9823  
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//HQ USSOUTHCOM JS MIAMI FL

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 000198

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR INFLUENZA MONITORING GROUP MGSF01  
DEPT PASS TO HHS  
DEPT FOR USAID LAC/AA, GH/AA, GM/OMA  
ALSO FOR USAID MISSION DIRECTORS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [TBIO](#) [XL](#) [TD](#)

SUBJECT: NO CONFIRMED H1N1 CASES IN TRINIDAD, PORT SECURITY  
INCREASED AS A PRECAUTION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: There are no confirmed cases of the H1N1 virus in T&T. Seven individuals returning from Mexico were quarantined, of which six tested negative for Type A Influenza and were released and one is still under observation. No facility in T&T currently has the capacity to test for the new strain of H1N1 causing the current outbreak. The Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC) expects to receive a limited number of primers from CDC to begin testing for the new H1N1 strain during the week of May 4. GOTT has responded to the outbreak by requiring screening of incoming passengers. Limited quantities of Tamiflu, lack of diagnosis capacity, and limited health care facilities constrain the GOTT's ability to respond to an H1N1 outbreak. END SUMMARY  
LIMITED TESTING AND DIAGNOSIS CAPACITY

¶2. (U) The Trinidad Public Health Laboratory (TPHL) is capable of performing initial screenings to identify Type A Influenza. Individuals who test negative for Type A Influenza are medically cleared for the H1N1 virus. Cases testing positive for Type A Influenza will be forwarded to CAREC. At this time CAREC is unable to test for the H1N1 strain causing the current epidemic; CAREC staff have the skills to complete diagnosis but lack necessary primers. CAREC expects to receive a limited quantity of primers from CDC to begin testing during the week of May 4. Until then, CAREC will forward positive tests via FedEx to CDC in Atlanta for diagnosis, with results expected 48 hours from when the sample leaves T&T.

GOTT RESPONSE

¶3. (U) Following guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO), GOTT has not restricted travel. However, GOTT has posted Public Health Officers at each air and sea port of entry and enlisted the help of airlines and customs and immigration officials to prevent the H1N1 virus from entering the country. While on board, passengers are asked to complete a health declaration form for preliminary screening. These forms are reviewed by the Ministry of Health who will forward suspected cases to the Port Health Authorities. Per GOTT request, airlines must ask passengers coming from areas with H1N1 outbreaks or those experiencing flu-like symptoms to report to a Public Health Officer upon arrival. Health Officers will conduct interviews to gather contact information for surveillance and follow up as well as to ask if the passenger is experiencing influenza symptoms. Passengers who display symptoms are immediately escorted to a specially designated Medical Examination Room. An ambulance then is called to transport them to a designated health facility.

¶4. (U) Customs and immigration officials have been alerted to look at all passengers as they enter the country. Passengers displaying flu-like symptoms are referred to a Public Health Officer. All

customs and immigration officials have been given face masks.

15. (U) The Ministry of Health reportedly has 1.5 million surgical masks and 10,000 N95 masks. There are conflicting reports that GOTT has either 138,000 or 120,000 doses of Tamiflu, originally stockpiled to prepare for pandemic bird flu.

#### CARIBBEAN AIRLINES RESPONSE

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16. (U) EconOff spoke with the Director of Marketing and Corporate Communication for Caribbean Airlines who reported passengers are expressing concern and asking questions, however they are not canceling travel plans. The airline is distributing face masks to those passengers who display flu-like symptoms, encouraging passengers to wash their hands, and distributing anti-bacterial gel.

RIES